

## Contributed

### DEAD WHILE LIVING.

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"She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."  
1 Tim. 5: 6.

A philosopher, John Stuart Hill, is reported to have said, "It was a great discovery to me when I found out that life is not all fun." There are many more who start life with the same idea, but have it rudely jostled out of them—or else under its delusion miss the true aim and zest of living.

The apostle, in the text, is laying down a principle which is general. Its particular application happened to be to women. But it is evident that they are not the only ones who come under its characterization. Though perhaps it would seem that they are more liable to the danger than men—at least in some circles of society.

The meaning is plain: the one whose end and aim in life is pleasure is dead while yet living. It is true of the devotee of pleasure, whose idea of life is to extract as much of pleasure out of it as possible. It is true also of those who, though they work, do so in order that the time they are not obliged to work may be spent in pleasuring. It is also true of the one who pays toll of good works of charity or church work to cover a life of self-indulgence and worldliness. At heart, all these belong to the same class.

But it must not be thought that Paul condemns all pleasure or happiness—or recreation. Pleasure has its legitimate and necessary place. It is that of relaxation, recreation. It has overstepped its bounds when it goes beyond that, to the extent of producing weariness, lassitude or dissipation. When its pace becomes killing, and it rules the life, the river of pleasure has broken its banks and becomes a raging, destructive torrent.

For the Christian, when pleasure has more zest than religion, when it detracts from efficiency and influence for God, and when it effaces the line of separation from the world, so that the clearness of Christian testimony is lost, it is casting its deadly upas shadow over the life.

But why does Paul say that the one who lives in pleasure is dead while living? The reasons are not far to seek and they are numerous and weighty.

1. The devotee of pleasure is dead while living because the springs of life have been atrophied—deadened by selfishness.

Pleasure seeking is essentially selfish. Its thought is for self-enjoyment. Its aim is to secure the greatest amount of that enjoyment for self. It is a reversal of the whole machinery of life. Life is designed by its Maker to be centrifugal—its aim, its effort—to benefit others, to make others happy, to put as much of happiness in the world as possible. The life of pleasure seeking is centripetal. All that it touches is correlated with reference to the amount of pleasure it will yield to self. And thus the whole machinery of life is reversed in its action and thrown in upon itself. Instead of giving, it is getting; instead of diffusion, it is hoarding. Thus its

growth is stopped, its fruit bearing is stopped and ultimately its zest of living ceases—because selfishness is productive of dissatisfaction, wretchedness, unhappiness.

2. The one who lives in pleasure is dead while living, because the true end and aim of life is forfeited.

The end of life is to "glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." The eternal enjoyment of God is attained only through the aim of glorifying him. The aim of the liver in pleasure is to glorify self. Such an aim can never reach the goal of eternal happiness, because it is contrary to the law of our nature which is the law of God. It fails necessarily of its very purpose. God has so created us that in making the prime object and aim in life the promotion of his glory, in a life of unselfishness, holiness, and service we are to attain our highest, purest and most lasting happiness. And it can be attained in no other way. Men have taxed their ingenuity to invent methods of producing pleasure and happiness different from God's way, but always they have proved miserable failures. He who made us, made us just that way, and to ignore, or rebel against it, is to rebel against our very nature. Thus the awful blunder of the liver in pleasure is seen in that the whole end and aim of life, the very reason of being, is missed, lost.

3. The liver in pleasure is dead while living because the whole result of life is lost.

Life is given in order that it might bear fruit in good deeds and noble character cultivated. The pleasure-seeker is bent upon pleasurable sensations and indulgence, so that the highest and best qualities of character are neglected, and being neglected become atrophied and die without bearing their rightful fruit. Self-restraint, purity, kindness, modesty, humility, generosity, patience, tenderness, meekness, are traits which are exalted, but they are not fostered or attained through a life of self-indulgence, of sensual pleasure. On the contrary, self-indulgence in pleasure kills them outright. The life of pleasure-seeking is not productive of a life of good deeds. Its thought and aim are different; namely, for its own enjoyment. It has no time, no taste, no desire, no inclination, for the life of doing good. It is dead, to all the great department of fruit-bearing characteristics of normal life.

4. The liver in pleasure is dead because the life of pleasure-seeking deals a death blow to the spiritual life. Its thought, its time, its efforts, its aim, its desire are occupied with sensory things—things that give pleasure to self, but perish in the using. In the din of the world's pleasures the ear is deadened to the voice of the Spirit of God. The heart is entwined with the lures of the world and the flesh, instead of having its affections set upon things above. The mind is the mind of the flesh, not the mind of Christ. Fellowship, communion with God is supplanted by the companionships and affinities of the world. The immortal soul with its high possibilities of likeness to God, its cravings for fellowship with God, is ignored, neglected, and becomes shrivelled, dry and dead from sheer neglect to feed upon its rightful food, the Bread of Life. "The Bread of God is he that cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world." "Wherefore do ye spend